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Creation

Social Science

and Humanities

QUARTERLY



He Is Risen

CREATION SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES SOCIETY

The Creation Social Science and Humanities Society (CSSHS) was incorporated in Wichita, Kansas, in 1977. The CSSHS is educational, and will promote and disseminate information on the implications of the Biblical creation model of origins for the social sciences and humanities, with emphasis on the development of these disciplines in accordance with the rapidly emerging and increasingly well established natural scientific models of Biblical creation.

The **Quarterly Journal** is directed toward teachers and students of the social sciences and humanities, especially in institutions of higher learning. The CSSHS may also publish books, monographs, and other writings, and sponsor speakers, seminars, and research projects related to its educational purpose.

IRS tax-exempt status was granted December 30, 1977. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Voting membership is initially by invitation of the Board of Directors of the CSSHS to candidates eligible on the following basis.

a. persons with at least a baccalaureate degree in the social sciences or humanities; or

b. persons 18 years old or over, who have held office in another creation-science organization with beliefs substantially identical with those contained in the CSSHS **Statement of Belief**, for at least one year immediately prior to applying for membership in the CSSHS; or who have a commitment to our belief and work clearly evidenced by their record of actual involvement. Voting membership dues are \$12 (foreign, \$13 U.S.) per year.

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Both voting and sustaining memberships include subscription to the **CSSH Quarterly**, and are reckoned as beginning and ending in September.

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Editorial

Dear Readers:

The Creation Science Legal Defense Fund recently distributed an accounting of various creationist scientists, educators and students around the country who have been discriminated against by their respective academic institutions. Among the listed cases of often blatant and seemingly intentional violation of civil rights and principles of academic freedom is an account of my own minor incident of having been turned down for promotion at Wichita State University. In recent weeks I have felt a desire to state publicly that Wichita State University should not be placed in the same category of religious intolerance as these other institutions. By God's grace, they have earned a better report.

Make no mistake about it, my involvement in biblical creationism and opposition to evolution has been and continues to be a perplexing state of affairs for many of my colleagues, and I have not been promoted to the Associate Professor rank. Nevertheless, I would not characterize my relations with Wichita State University as involving religious persecution. For one thing, all levels of administrative officials of the institution have dealt fairly with me from the very beginning of my involvement in creationism. Whatever difficulties have occurred have come in relationships with my colleagues, and most of that has been in the informal arena. The denial of promotion was primarily related to the fact that my creation oriented work — such as with this journal — is not recognized as bona fide psychology activity. This may be discrimination, but it is not necessarily religious, or even harmful discrimination in the overall perspective of the University. Academics are like most of us in that they tend to be wedded to the status-quo and are generally slow to recognize new developments and discoveries that upset old ideas and traditions. This makes it difficult for new ideas to get accepted, but it also protects against a lot of pseudo-academic nonsense. My involvement in biblical creationism has cost me professionally, but I know of other colleagues who have suffered in similar ways to myself for "unorthodox" interests and activities having nothing to do with creationism or Christianity. One colleague, for instance, occasionally laments to me over the fact that his consulting work for a local military defense contractor is given little weight by his fellow academics. Such is life.

Of far more importance than promotions and recognition are the less tangible areas of academic freedom, support, and access to the resources of the university for pursuit of one's interests and convictions. It is in these areas that in my case Wichita State University has done itself proud as an institution dedicated to the values of free inquiry and expression. The great majority of my colleagues and administrative officials alike have rejected the spirit of religious bigotry and hysteria which this whole controversy so often stimulates. When the chips were down, they opted for the basic academic values of intellectual tolerance. As for scientific creationism, it will have to prove itself, just like any other new kid on the block. At Wichita State University, it is getting — somewhat reluctantly perhaps, but nevertheless getting — that chance. My

work environment is excellent. My yearly salary adjustments are fair. (In fact, I am a member of the departmental budget committee which decides salaries.) In my teaching I receive no interference with the reasonable exploration and application of creationist and Christian perspectives where appropriate to the subject matter of the course. The vice president of CSSHS, Diane Powell, was accepted into the psychology graduate program with full knowledge of her creationist views and activities. She was awarded a graduate assistantship and has never had any problems of religious discrimination. I am confident that my colleagues in the Department will write fair and impartial assessments of her abilities as recommendations into whatever area she wishes to pursue upon graduation. A similar report can be made for the frequent contributor and secretary of CSSHS, Ellen Myers, who was enthusiastically accepted into graduate studies in the History Department at WSU. I am grateful for my years of association with Wichita State University and have a deep love both for the institution and its personnel. I am greatly in their debt. May God's grace and mercy be abundant in their midst.

Paul D. Ackerman

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monograph on Johann Georg Hamann

Johann Georg Hamann: Interpreter of Reality in Christ by Ellen Myers is a scholarly introductory monograph on the life and work of the outstanding German Lutheran Christian Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788). This study was done with the encouragement of James C. O'Flaherty, dean of American Hamann scholars, and received his warm praise. In manuscript form, 69 pp. incl. Notes and Bibliography. Available from Creation Social Science and Humanities Society, 1429 N. Holyoke, Wichita, Kansas 67208, at \$5.00 per copy ppd.

"New Age" Leaflet

An excellent brief summary of cosmic evolutionist "New Age" thought, "A New Age for Man — Cosmic Evolutionism," suitable for church bulletin inserts or tract handouts, is available from the Bible-Science Association, 2911 E. 42nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55406. Single copies free upon request, 100 copies for \$4.00. We most highly recommend this outstanding teaching tool.

Sacred Music Composition Contest

The Music Department of Wayland Baptist University is pleased to announce the 1985 Sacred Music Composition Contest, with cash awards totaling \$435.00; first place — \$250, second place — \$110, third place — \$75.

Entries must be original and unpublished, may be entered only by the composer, and must be received at Wayland Baptist University by July 10, 1985. For further information, write to W. Duane Harris, Music Department, Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, Texas 79072.

POETRY

Eternal Echo

Mary Tenbrink

*Ageless apple,
pure white
Hunger?
Curiosity?
Apple.
No. Eve. No.
Core.
Hell opens,
sin.
Bitter.
Black bitter.*

*Womb.
Blessed white.
Dove.
Water to wine.
New wine.
Jeers.
Thorns.
Man's thorns.
Carpenter
wood, nails.
Flesh
Whip
Blood.*

*Three dawns.
Arisen.
Resurrected.
It is finished
just begun.*

Mary Tenbrink receives her mail at 2021 N. Old Manor #303, Wichita, Kansas 67203.

Before the Fall

Carla Vale

Listen!

*Can you hear the Lord's footsteps
On myriad blades of young grass
Glist'ning
With diamond dewdrops
Of early dawn?*

Listen!

*Can you hear the sweet echo
Of His voice speaking them forth?
Wisdom
And love and power
Are in His Word.*

Listen!

*Can you hear the faint tremor,
Creation's foretaste of dread?
Whisp'ring
A snake is crouching
Beside our bed.*

Listen!

*Hearken well to God's promise
Of joy and peace in His way,
Blissful
In holy freedom —
If we obey.*

Carla Vale receives her mail c/o CSSHS, 1429 N. Holyoke, Wichita, KS 67208.

Today Your Love

Carla Vale

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

— Revelation 1:5b-6

*Today your love, Beloved, holds my heart in awe,
What can I say but this?
How could you shed your blood for me who broke your law?
How can I feel your kiss?*

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*Today your love, Beloved, makes my musings still.
I lean upon your breast,
Content to know your presence and your perfect will
In you alone I rest.*

*Today your love, Beloved, draws me to your side,
You make me king and priest
To God our Father Who receives me as your bride —
O come, sweet wedding feast!*

Sing Praises

Sue Paar

*As a child I stand
before the sun-drenched land
and listen
to the sweet tunes
of nature in my soul.
Melody and song
all come from and belong
to the peaceful kingdom
of God's Creation
from of old.
Unfolding,
revealing,
of itself at first,
then, first and last, of Him,
I stand in awe
listening . . .
for the trumpet sound —
His very presence to attend!*

Sue Paar receives her mail at 11612 Price Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73170.

The Limitations of Variety, or Cowper's Irony Unmasked

Eve Lewis Perera

Sometimes I take a crossgrained delight in questioning the familiar sayings with which our ears are filled. We hear them so often that they sound true, but not all of them stand up well under interrogation. The latest one with which I am dissatisfied is "Variety is the spice of life."

My first surprise on beginning to chip away at this old quotation was the discovery that it was written by the poet William Cowper. The second was that he intended it for an ironic barb, not for the statement of fact for which people take it nowadays. Cowper was talking about dandies who are slaves to changing fashion:

Variety's the very spice of life
That gives it all its flavor. We have run
Through ev'ry change that fancy at the loom
Exhausted has had genius to supply
And studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance a little used
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.

It is not strange that Cowper's irony is misapprehended as truth in our day: it is the culmination of a change in attitudes that had begun during his lifetime. He was a troubled evangelical in the midst of the eighteenth-century "enlightenment." Two hundred years before Cowper, most educated Englishmen would have thought that change was more to be feared than sought after. Three of Edmund Spenser's most profound cantos in the *Faerie Queene* are those on "Mutabilitie" — change, decay, and death. Cowper was witnessing the loosening of the moral structure of "Christendom," where at one point virtually everyone was steeped in awareness of the Scriptures and of their attitudes toward change. Most of Spenser's contemporaries knew they had a God "in whom is no variableness, neither any shadow of turning."

Cowper wished to preserve that same changeless certainty, but it was harder for him because society in general understood it less. For us, another 200 years later, there is almost no consensus in society in favor of enduring and changeless truth. But Christians are asked to be "salt" in this "post-Christendom" civilization. Insofar as we know the eternal things to be true, we will find ourselves consciously rejecting certain pressures toward variety or variability. These pressures are now so extreme that people feel compelled to change sexual partners, and indeed their very values, as regularly as they change their clothing styles.

I remember when the movie "Emmanuelle" came to Denver, where we as a thirtyish non-Christian couple were living. Gathering that there was some-

Eve Lewis Perera receives her mail at 219 South Mountain Road, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

thing sexually new and strange about it, I felt put off at the idea of going to see it. But I told myself cheerfully that I had to adapt and "evolve with the times." I never did see "Emmanuelle." A year later, I met Jesus Christ, and realized that I had to change indeed — but not so as to "evolve with the times." Our days are such that *only* being a strong Christian provides much hope of anchoring an individual in the unsettling tides of change and hedonistic adaptation.

One Christian whom I admire has excluded from his life some forms of variety that may be natural parts of yours and mine. He will not read novels, declaring that for him they are a waste of time. Although I sometimes read novels, and appreciate their insight into people quite different from myself, I am moved by the deliberateness of this man's decision, and respect the way it fits in the overall integrity of his life. Recently he told me that he almost never takes vacations from his work as a tool-and-die maker, except a day or two for visiting family. But last summer he used his whole vacation to go canoeing on the Allagash with his grown son. He told about this with the shy eagerness of an eight-year-old who has just caught his first fish. Those who take long vacations every year in different places have no joy approaching his, I think.

In this I began to see how useless variety is unless there exists a sameness to which it is a counterpoint. The other day I heard a social worker say he wished he could explain to young people how many lovely things there are to learn about a woman to whom one has been married for thirteen years. Our friends with their serial marriages, their jet-around-the world vacations, their constantly-replaced wardrobes and disposable personalities, will never know that joyfully steady variety; they have been deceived into choosing a fickle variableness in its place.

Cowper would have liked the sort of variety that is a rest from long sameness. He loved his quiet life writing and taking care of his rabbits and his garden, but toward the end, when long walks grew uncomfortable for him, he complained to a friend that he lacked variety. To obtain it through a glittering round of London dinner parties, however, would not have appealed to him in the least.

Cowper was a sad emotional cripple, having convinced himself as a result of a dream that God had damned him beyond hope of appeal. But he never stopped testifying to God's truth and goodness in his poetry. I dare to hope that Cowper was wrong about his dream, and that when I meet him he will be wearing the expression of an eight-year-old who has just caught his first fish! I would want to tell him that his ideas on variety are considerably more out of step with the times now than they were in the eighteenth century. I hope I could also say that most Christians walk at his unfashionable pace.

I find it a bizarre amusement to read fashion articles in the *New York Times*. Models are photographed with some portions of their anatomy swelled by ballooning bright fabrics, others wrapped tighter than skin. Furs in strange colors and patterns flap behind them as they teeter in absurd shoes. Shiny vinyl and patent gleam and leer under the lights. Up and down the body; in and out; and all through the palettes of color and texture, the trendy clothes move, and the trendy young people throng mirror-walled stores to buy them. It leaves me with a numb sadness; how could I connect with these people humanly? what would they say to me?

But hard though it is, I must see past the variables in their beings to the constants: the human loneliness, the longing for integrity and certainty, built

into them by their changeless creator. We who are waiting and praying for the "new heaven and the new earth" know that both changelessness and variety are to be found in our God, who changes not, but whose mercies are new every morning. We must be willing to be thought boring, to be pitied or despised, by the trend-setters. If any of them grow weary of change, we are there to share with them the way in which variety only serves to help us love more deeply what we already have.

Priest and King of the Creation

Father Dumitru Staniloae

We shall only understand the character of the world when we think of it as a gift or present.

The whole world ought to be regarded as the visible part of a universal and continuing sacrament, and all man's activities as a sacramental, divine communion.

Because man is unable to give God anything except that which he has already received from God, man learns to perceive the world as gift and sacrament by sacrificing something in this world for God's sake, as a sign of his grateful love, and as the vehicle of this love. God for his part returns to man what man has sacrificed in the form of fresh gifts, containing a new manifestation of His love, in a new and repeated blessing. "Grace for Grace." And so an unbroken interchange between God and man in man's use of the world takes place, an ever-renewed and growing mutuality of love. The more man discovers the beauty and the higher use of created things, and the greater the gratitude and love with which he responds to God, the more God responds with still greater love and blessing, because man is in the position to receive it.

Man puts the seal of his understanding and of his intelligent work on to creation, thereby humanizing it and giving it humanized back to God. He actualizes the world's potentialities. Thus the world is not only a gift but a task for man. Man is able to mark the world with his seal because the world as the gift of God's love for man is not the fruit of necessity but the fruit of divine freedom. If it were the fruit of necessity there would be no freedom in it, and it would develop as an inexorable casual process. But it is so constituted that divine freedom and human freedom can manifest themselves in an unbroken dialogue.

Reprinted with permission from *The Time of the Spirit: Readings through the Christian Year*, George Every, Richard Harries and Kallistos Ware, editors, published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York 10707.

Returning the World to God

Father Alexander Schmemmann

Contrary to our secular experience of time, the liturgical day begins with Vespers, in the evening. This is, of course, the reminiscence of the biblical "And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Genesis 1:5).

The vesperal service [in the Orthodox Church] does not begin as a religious "epilogue" of the day. It begins at the *beginning*, and this means in the "rediscovery," in adoration and thanksgiving, of the world as God's creation. The Church takes us, as it were, to that first evening on which man, called by God to life, opened his eyes and saw what God in his love was giving to him, saw all the beauty, all the glory of the temple in which he was standing, and rendered thanks to God. And in this thanksgiving *he became himself*.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. Blessed art thou, O Lord.

O Lord, how marvellous are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all.

The earth is full of thy riches.

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live;

I will praise my God, while I have any being (Ps. 104).

And it must be so. There must be someone in this world — which rejected God and in this rejection, in this blasphemy, became a chaos of darkness — there must be someone to stand in its centre, and to discern, to see it again as full of divine riches, as the cup full of life and joy, as beauty and wisdom, and to thank God for it. This "someone" is Christ, the New Adam who restores that "eucharistic life" which I, the old Adam, have rejected and lost; who makes me again what I am, and restores the world to me. And if the Church *is in Christ*, its initial act is always the act of thanksgiving, of returning the world to God.

Reprinted with permission from *The Time of the Spirit: Readings through the Christian Year*, George Every, Richard Harries and Kallistos Ware, editors, published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York 10707.

Editor's Note: The words "Eucharist" and "eucharistic" refer to the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion and are used in the liturgies of the Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran Churches. They come from the Greek "eucharisto" which means "thank you."

The importance of biblical creation is very highly emphasized in the worship of the Orthodox Church, as is evident from the above selection. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann (1921-83) was a Russian Orthodox theologian and Dean of St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary.

God's Sabbath Rest — Man's Created Destiny

Ellen Myers

God created man on the sixth day of creation week and rested on the seventh. He thus timed man's creation so man, made in His own image and likeness, would live the first full day of his life on God's day of rest, and be rooted and nourished in God's rest as he proceeded to exercise dominion under the Creator over all other works of God's hands (Genesis 1:26). This may well have been in the mind of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ — the mind of the eternal Word by Whom the Father has created man and all things in the beginning — when He gently told Martha, careful and troubled about many things, that Mary, sitting at His feet in His rest to hear His word, had chosen "that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:38-42).

Because God Himself rested on the seventh day of creation week — man's first full day of life — from all His work of creation, He blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it by enjoining rest for His people, their servants, their cattle, and strangers within their gates (Exodus 20:8-11). This solemn commandment reaffirms the literal truth of the creation account. It also witnesses to the fallen nature of man who needs to be commanded to rest rather than perversely harming himself and his fellow creatures by excessive, continuous labor. On the other hand, Jesus Christ frequently "transgressed" the pharisaical sabbath-keeping rules of His time on earth. These rules also testify to the fallen nature of man who would make a show of godliness while denying the spirit thereof, and who would perversely harm himself and his fellow creatures by forbidding even that action essential to sustaining life. Both excessive labor and lifeless, mechanical, hypocritical "rest" do violence to God's sabbath, dishonoring Him, and disobeying God's creation mandate for man's stewardship under God over the works of God's hands. Because of God's creation mandate "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" and "the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" as Christ told the Pharisees (Mark 2:23-28).

Proper, godly sabbath-keeping is decreed by God the Creator as man's normal, originally intended and perpetual state. It is described as follows:

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine own words:

Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Honoring Him, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words — this is the state, we realize, in which we should be

found at *all* times. This is the permanent sabbath which God's day of rest after the six days of creation was meant to begin, and which man's fall into sin away from God is delaying from full fruition. If we truly have eternal life, knowing Him the true God, and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent (John 17:3), then we know that keeping the sabbath as described above cannot be a one-day-out-of-seven affair but is meant to be our whole life, every day and every moment. This is why we are taught in God's word, the Bible, about the keeping of holy days here and now that they may be kept unto the Lord, or not, as a man is fully persuaded in his own mind (Romans 14:5-6). For *every* day is to be holy unto the Lord! It is not Sunday or Sabbath Day now; am I, are you living this week day "honoring the LORD, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words, delighting ourselves in our Lord?" To do so — to cease from our own ways and works — is to enter into God's rest (expressly so defined in Hebrews 4:10). Man was made for God's rest, and God's rest was made for man when God rested on the seventh day of creation week, the first and last Sabbath of created time.

Mankind's punishment after the Fall into sin away from God — the curse of the ground for man's sake, making his labor hard; painful childbirth and woman's subjection to man; and death, returning of the body to the dust from whence it was taken — faithfully reflects the despoiling of God's rest caused by the Fall. No longer can God expect undiluted joy and praise from man as the fruit or harvest of His creation labor. No longer does mankind, intended to be the sinless Bride of God's Son, delight itself and Him by doing His good will from the heart; nay, the goad of the law must be used to restrain us. No longer can God joy as a Father over His children, man made in His image and likeness, but their birth and upbringing is painful and all too often ends in miscarriage. Finally, God's redemption of His creation, groaning and travailing due to the delayed liberty of His born-again children from among fallen mankind (Romans 8:19-23) requires the death of His only begotten, beloved Son (though His Son, not corrupted or tainted by sin in any way, rose again bodily from the dead). In all our miseries since the Fall we reflect the broken rest of our Creator-Father Who is "afflicted in all our afflictions" (Isaiah 61:9). Thus even in our miseries we still reflect His creation-decreed image and likeness. This is why Jesus Christ, God's perfect and unblemished likeness, Who does nothing but what He sees the Father do, could weep over Jerusalem and agonize at Gethsemane and on the cross, and can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15).

Yet also, because "there remaineth . . . a rest (margin: "the keeping of a sabbath") to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9), death and hell cannot ultimately overcome or hold down God's sabbath rest crowning creation and creation's redemption and restoration, nor our own rest in the Father by Christ if we have come so to know Him. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it — "we who have believed do enter into rest" (Isaiah 58:14; Hebrews 4:3).

From the above it follows that godly rest and leisure does not mean enforced total inactivity. It is true that there is such a thing as "sacred idleness, the pursuit of which," as George MacDonald (1824-1901) wrote, "is now fearfully neglected."¹ This is that sacred idleness in which Mary sat at Jesus' feet while Martha was "cumbered about much serving" (Luke 10:39, 40). Note that Jesus did not comment about Martha's work itself but rather her attitude towards it. George Herbert wrote this beautiful poem about a godly, restful attitude to work:

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see;
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for thee.

All may of thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture, "for thy sake,"
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone
Which turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.²

Let us neither avoid nor neglect "divine drudgery" unto our Lord, but remember Mary, the mother of our Lord, who no doubt lovingly tended to all bodily needs of her Holy Child Jesus weekdays and sabbath days alike.

When we are fully surrendered to our Lord and determined to keep His creation-ordained sabbath rest at all times as He sees fit, He will faithfully instruct us by His Holy Spirit how to regard each day unto Him. The story is told of God-fearing Russian Orthodox or Catholic nuns who were determined to do no work whatsoever on *any* day for the communist regime since they were the servants of God and not of Satan. They were put on punishment rations, tortured cruelly, and finally exposed to the arctic Siberian cold and bitter wind to stand immobile, without gloves and caps, eight hours a day for three days. Yet they survived without so much as frostbite. The enemy, awed by this miracle, gave in and the nuns were allowed to spend their prison term in sacred idleness unto the Lord. Their example instilled religious faith in thousands of prisoners and guards.³ In our own super-active, success-oriented, materialistic West a Christian believer's godly, non-pharisaical, gentle and joyful abstinence from non-life-supporting work on Sundays can be a powerful testimony.

God's rest at the end of creation week, and man's simultaneous first full day spent with God in His rest and preceding his exercise of dominion over creation under God, also exemplify the uninterrupted, harmonious peace and fellowship with God the Creator for which man is destined, and which must undergird man's stewardship under God. On that first sabbath day man's fellowship with God was so close that both he and his wife were naked before God and each other, and were not ashamed (Genesis 2:25). In today's fallen world godly men, acknowledging their nakedness before God to Whom nothing is hid, must also confess the shame of their sinfulness and above all praise Christ for washing it away with His blood, thus restoring fellowship with the Father-Creator. To the regenerate there is a continuous sense of the presence of the Living God, and of being kept, or continually recalled by Him into His rest. How much a part of our daily lives this can be is simply told in the seventeenth century classic *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence. Brother Lawrence "was pleased when he could take up a straw from the

ground for the love of God, seeking Him only, and nothing else, not even His gifts."⁴ He said, "By rising after my falls, and by frequently renewed acts of faith and love, I am come to a state wherein it would be as difficult for me not to think of God as it was at first to accustom myself to it."⁵ An observer said that "in the greatest hurry of business in the kitchen he still preserved his recollection and heavenly-mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each thing in its season, with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquility of spirit. The time of business," said he "does not with me differ from the time of prayer . . ."⁶ Even so it could have been with our father Adam and our mother Eve if they had only rested in their Creator and His eternally sure Word! Then they would have eagerly and joyfully listened to His footsteps in Eden each evening, each moment, after completing their dominion tasks to His and their own mutual delight. Even so it will be for His good and faithful servants when they rule their "many things" (Matthew 25:21), their "ten cities or five" (Luke 19:17, 19) in His new heaven and earth.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ *George MacDonald, An Anthology*, edited by C.S. Lewis (New York: Macmillan Dolphin Books Edition, 1947, 1962), No. 296, p. 131.
- ² *Protestant Episcopal Church Hymnal* (New York: Seabury Press, 1940, 1943), No. 476; George Herbert wrote these words in 1633.
- ³ John Noble and Glenn D. Everett, *I Found God in Soviet Russia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1959, Fourth Printing, March 1960), pp. 113-117.
- ⁴ Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God* (Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company Spire Books, 1958, Fifteenth Printing June 1979), p. 14.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

Author's note: I praise our Lord for the dear brothers and sisters of the Wichita State University Faculty Bible Study Group, whose discussion of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the fall of 1983 planted and watered many of the seeds springing up in this paper.

Book Review

Walter Leibrecht, *God and Man in the Thought of Hamann*, transl. by James H. Stam and Martin H. Bertram. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1966. Originally published in Germany as *Gott und Mensch bei Johann Georg Hamann* by Carl Bertelsmann Verlag, Guetersloh, Germany, 1958.

In the eighteenth century, Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) was perhaps the foremost defender of the biblical Christian faith against the triumphant advance of essentially anti-Christian Enlightenment rationalism. While his work was largely neglected during the nineteenth century, interest in it has burgeoned since the late 1940s to the point that some commentators have been speaking of a "Hamann-Revival." Leibrecht reports that more books were published in Europe about Hamann between 1950 and 1958 than about any other philosopher or theologian (p. 3).

Hamann's writings received the interest and a measure of qualified admiration from Germany's greatest classical poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe, admittedly not a Christian, discussed Hamann at some length in his autobiographical *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Poetry and Truth), and hoped to bring about the publication of Hamann's collected works while also confessing that Hamann remained obscure to him. The German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel extensively reviewed Hamann's works but remained essentially hostile to their content which he attempted to cast in his own pantheist-idealist world view. Not surprisingly, Hamann "failed" in Hegel's judgment as a would-be pantheist-idealist. Soren Kierkegaard admired Hamann as his "emperor," and was familiar with his works as shown by Walter Lowrie and others. However, Hamann cannot be called an existentialist in the Kierkegaardian model as evident from his own writings and as pointed out by numerous commentators.

In the introduction especially prepared for the American edition of his book, Leibrecht calls Hamann "a modern Christian apologist of the first order" (p. 4). He then sets Hamann apart from, on the one hand, the "Hegelian view of divine immanence, basically pagan as it is" (p. 5) and, on the other hand, the "Kierkegaardian concept of the total transcendence of God." (p. 5). With regard to the latter, Leibrecht perceptively comments:

One can ask whether this effort may perhaps constitute no less a misinterpretation of the biblical creator-creature relationship than does the Hegelian version of divine immanence. The creative and redeeming presence of God in the whole of his creation, in nature and history, were denied, if not in word then at least in fact. (p. 6).

Leibrecht believes that Hamann's thought is "amazingly germane to our time — indeed more to ours than to his own period" (p. 8). He points out that the problem of man's place in a world seemingly made mechanical, huge and incoherent all at once by modern thought since the Renaissance has been debated not only in our own day but over and over again once the medieval consensus about man's place in the order of the universe had broken down. Hamann was the great Christian seer of his century who understood the mirage of Enlightenment rationalism and saw that this development "must

lead to a lopsided image of man, in which the reality of man, his wholeness, is exchanged for a concept of man, an abstraction void of all life. . . . The identification of man with reason must result in the debasement of God's creation; for the creation would be regarded merely as the raw material for our rational-scientific exploration and experimentation. . . . If reason was to establish man as master of the universe, it eventually had to proclaim its own complete autonomy. It therefore had to discard the doctrine of creation, as well as the doctrine of man's radical sinfulness. The rationalist could not accept the fact that man, as man, is in need of divine salvation." (p. 10).

Leibrecht proceeds with an excellent analysis of existentialism. The existentialist artificially divides the world between the self, which can be free and authentic, and the dull, insensible world around him, which takes on meaning only if it becomes 'my world,' a projection of my own existence." (p. 12) But for Hamann, "God-given, and hence real existence is prior to thought." (p. 12) "All that is real . . . is so because it is a creation, the result of divine action. . . . Faith, for Hamann, is not a psychological concept as in Hume. It exists in our relatedness to God and his creation. And as such it results in certainty." (p. 15)

Leibrecht concisely explains how Hamann used the "*coincidentia oppositorum*," the "principle of opposites" which was introduced into Western philosophy and theology by Giordano Bruno and Nicholas of Cusa, and which is non-Christian, pantheist thought ultimately leading to the satanic identification of evil with good as though they were at bottom the same — as though there could be a "marriage of heaven and hell." Leibrecht points out, that "(t)here is, however, a decisive difference: the *coincidentia oppositorum* in Hamann's thought never becomes a metaphysical principle of unity . . . For Hamann, it is only through trust in God, the creator, redeemer, and new creator, that we know the realness and wholeness of the world." (p. 14)

Two centuries ahead of such venerable present-day Christian "reconstructionists" as Cornelius van Til and Rousas John Rushdoony, Hamann set out to unmask the apostate, would-be autonomous *presuppositions* undergirding anti-Christian thought systems of all kinds. For example, the entire Enlightenment of Hamann's age, and also Immanuel Kant who seemingly superseded it, based their thought upon the concept of "sound reason." But "the objectivity of reason was considered by Hamann to be a self-delusion based on a number of *untenable metaphysical assumptions*." (p. 15; *emphasis added*) "*Hamann saw as one of his main tasks the shaking of the foundations of this idea of autonomy, so powerful in his time as well as in ours.*" (p. 17) *Man must see himself as a creature* in the creational setting provided by God in the beginning and providentially sustained and guided by Him moment by moment, every moment. For Hamann

the term "creature" was not merely a term for man's lamentable finitude, as the term is used in most of contemporary theology; it is also a most glorious term, because only that which is created is real and only that which is real can become transparent and thus be a symbol of its divine originator. (pp. 19-20)

Hamann's biblical-creationist understanding of the Christian faith and life "issued in a deep affirmation of life and a profound feeling of gratitude towards the creator for this gift" (p. 20). Leibrecht goes on to conclude that "(t)herefore it was . . . quite natural for Hamann to revive vital aesthetics in his time." (p. 20). This statement coincides with the Christian aesthetics of, for example,

H.R. Rookmaaker (*The Creative Gift*, reviewed in the *CSSH Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 4, Summer 1983), who tells us that "life in Christ restores our possibility of living creatively." Hamann would have wholeheartedly agreed.

Leibrecht adds a word to contemporary theologians of our own time:

Many theologians seem to think that the world in its empirical reality cannot be touched or transformed by the divine reality. Here lies, I think, the self-imposed impotence of contemporary theology. . . . we have turned the order of being upside down. It is a self-made dilemma, for which we alone are responsible. . . . we have transferred this dilemma into a virtue by calling it the "destiny of man in the post-Christian era" . . . Barth and Bonhoeffer have introduced the idea and many have followed them. . . . it is said that "we are children no longer," and "having come of age," it is therefore our task to legitimate post-Christian secularism theologically. Hearing the witness of such wise and advanced maturity, one may wonder whether Jesus was not right when he made the statement that children are the ones who are closest to the kingdom of God. (p. 22)

The remainder of the book is divided into three parts, Part I, "The Action of God," Part II, "The Grandeur and Misery of Man," (a rather Pascalian title!), and Part III, "The Redemption of Man." All of it is very valuable, and no chapter or footnote (always accompanying the text) should be skipped. The footnotes are particularly useful to those who would learn more of and about Hamann, because many of them point out the strengths and the weaknesses of other commentaries on Hamann, a very useful feature since this introduction to Hamann's thought was published after much recent Hamann research had already been done.

Leibrecht's excellent explanations, summaries and comments upon Hamann are continually supported by relevant quotes from Hamann's own writings. A special vote of thanks must go to the able translators of both Leibrecht and Hamann, James H. Stam and Martin H. Bertram, whose hard work and excellence of final translation this reviewer, herself a German-born former professional interpreter-translator, having read Hamann in the original, is in a position to appreciate from within.

Leibrecht's book is so praiseworthy because he singles out biblical creation as the ground motive of Hamann's defense of the faith, and more, as the cornerstone of that living, reality-facing faith itself. Moreover, biblical creation of man in God's image is in Hamann's thought (and in the Bible) inseparable from man's redemption in Christ, and man's restoration to the fullness and glory of original creation in Christ. Creation is part and parcel of Bible prophecy, of Bible history and of God's providence in each and every event from one hair falling from my head to the portentous goal of all time and all human history — our Lord's return in glory. For Hamann, faith "is necessary to a recognition of the simplest reality and serious treatment of it; but . . . it is not an epistemological principle used for pragmatic purposes with results based on probability. It is the total belief in God in the sense of the Pauline *pistis*. . . . In Hamann's view, faith is the absolute prerequisite for all cognition and the indispensable presupposition for all truly rational thinking." (p. 94) For Hamann, faith is therefore also the prerequisite to learn to know our own selves! Leibrecht quotes Hamann as follows: "We therefore cannot but enlist the help of the first cause of all things, on which we are so immediately dependent, if we would

recognize our own self, our nature, our destiny, and our limitations."

Much else could be adduced to show the importance of biblical creation in Hamann's thought. From this fountainhead of God's image bestowed on man in creation flow also the implications Hamann saw for the humanities and social sciences (psychology began to become important already during his life). Leibrecht's excellent introduction to Hamann might be fruitfully complemented by James C. O'Flaherty's *Johann Georg Hamann and Unity and Language* (Hamann and linguistics); W.M. Alexander, *Johann Georg Hamann: Philosophy and Faith*; and Stephen N. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men: Hegel and Hamann on Religious Language and History*, all lovingly written from the biblical Christian perspective and highly recommended in their own right.

— Reviewed by Ellen Myers



Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788), Preacher of Christ in the Wilderness of the Enlightenment

Ellen Myers

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Germany's most famous poet, first learned of Johann Georg Hamann at a meeting in Strassburg with Hamann's close friend and pupil Johann Gottfried Herder, a famous German writer in his own right during the rise of the rationalistic, deistic Enlightenment. Herder disagreed fundamentally and in a number of specific details with his mentor Hamann, yet believed Hamann's thoughts so important that he ruthlessly tore up Goethe's previous manuscripts and referred him to Hamann's work on the Bible, Homer, Shakespeare, folk music, the origin of poetry and of language.

Goethe is profoundly moved. He reads Hamann's writings accessible to him. The impression is so strong that he refers to him in decisive moments to the end of his life. Later on he plans the edition of his works and letters and still promotes it during the last years of his life.¹

Hamann was widely known and greatly esteemed by leading thinkers of his time, however little they might understand or agree with his thoroughly biblical view of man and of all things and their origin in God's creation as told in the Bible. During the nineteenth century he was occasionally studied and recognized as the father of German classicism and also of Romanticism. Søren Kierkegaard spoke of him as his "Emperor"² and when Kierkegaard was rediscovered in Europe after World War I, some interest in Hamann also awoke, although not really in earnest until after World War II. It should be stated from the outset that despite Kierkegaard's praise and certain misinterpretations of Hamann due to the difficulty of Hamann's style and form Hamann cannot be classified with modern existentialist writers, nor with any school of thought fundamentally opposed to biblical Christianity.

Josef Nadler, perhaps the best-informed Hamann scholar of our generation who spent twenty-five years lovingly putting together the indispensable historic-critical edition of Hamann's works (and also wrote a Hamann biography which regrettably does not do Hamann justice as a Christian according to other Hamann students, and also when compared to Hamann's own writings and letters), was apparently mystified by Hamann's impact as a Christian sent forth by the providence of God Himself. He writes that Hamann

is the man who infected his century with his spirit and completely changed it. That awakening of the inner man around 1760 which found its artistic expression in classic-romantic culture arose from Hamann . . . The enigmatic power which this rare man radiated forth into his entire age is among the insoluble secrets of the history of human thought and spirit.³

Hamann was a contemporary of David Hume, the Scottish sceptic whose writings he read avidly and believed to be useful in bringing men to acknowledge their intellectual powerlessness, indeed bankruptcy without recourse to God. He was the first to write a critique of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, a work whose fundamental hostility to biblical thought he instantly recognized. Actually Hamann lived near Kant in the East Prussian city of Königsberg, and they knew each other for many years. After Hamann's heart conversion to Christ in 1758 his friend Berens enlisted Kant to reconvert Hamann back to the Enlightenment, but without the least success. Hamann wrote Kant about this attempt, "I must almost laugh over the *choice of a philosopher* for the purpose of bringing about in me a change of mind."⁴

Hamann realized from the very beginning of his walk with Christ that philosophers who do not take Christ as their starting point are not "neutral" but rather dedicated to presuppositions of their own. This is why, for instance, they deny the creation account of the Bible, and seek to substitute for it a "story" of their own which would "explain creation as a natural event."⁵ Moreover, these philosophers' arrogance demands that a work purporting to be inspired by God be expressed in philosophical notions they themselves recognize and approve of, so that they might "know things which are too high for us . . . it would be . . . a ridiculous demand to ask that Moses should explain about nature according to Aristotelian, Cartesian or Newtonian concepts." On the other hand, to assert "that Moses wrote only for the common rabble is either totally meaningless or a ridiculous way to judge."⁶ If we would be truly wise and understanding, we must humbly accept God's revelation as He sets it forth:

With what humility, with what silent attention and deep reverence we must receive that which the Creator of the world wants to reveal to us of the secrets of the great Week in which He labored over our earth. . . . As much as He condescended to communicate to us the little which it is possible, necessary and profitable for us to understand, by so much He yet exceeds our powers of thought.⁷

W.M. Alexander, examining Hamann's defense of the faith against the arrogant rationalism of the Enlightenment of his day, points out that Hamann's notion of biblical creation as condescension of God

offers less hospitality to pantheism than the classical symbols of "cause" (or "First Cause") and "ground" (of creation) where there is a clear invitation to include God in a casual chain or to conceive Him along the lines of the "lowest common denominator." In addition "condescension" contains the idea which is usually suggested by a symbol like "will" (creation is the result of God's "will") which marks off the radical discontinuity between the world and God.⁸

Furthermore, Alexander raises the excellent and important question whether traditional ways of explaining God's creation *ex nihilo* properly symbolize God's transcendence over creation. Such ways usually begin with the created world rather than God, whereas Hamann's concept of God's *condescension* in His act of creation *ex nihilo* provides a symbol which is God-oriented and makes God prior. Alexander perceptively writes:

The implication of the prior reality of God in the notion of condescension (His utter ontological priority) serves as a judgment of the usual irrationalisms which affirm *creatio ex nihilo* by symbols which are oriented to an ontologically autonomous world, secretly self-existent.⁹

Alexander illustrates this point by a telling reference to the art of the Baroque period in which Hamann lived. In this art, "the world is more real than God. . . . When God in His 'transcendence' is represented, it is 'transcendence' (as in Sebastiano Conca's 'David Dancing Before the Ark') over an otherwise 'solid' earth. There is no question here as to what reality is utterly prior — it is man's world and the human reason which has shaped it — and no amount of 'height' in the painting can improve God's 'status.' Divine infinity has disappeared and only a domesticated variety remains."¹⁰ This is precisely what Hamann protested against — and his protest is a thousandfold more valid today when the logical consequence of deist, rationalist Enlightenment thought is the order of the day: God, modern philosophy, art, science and even theology assert, is not needed at all in the picture.

For Hamann, on the contrary, God's creation "represents God's incredible humility. We do not need to explain how God is able to create anything, but rather how He is humble enough to allow anything to exist. . . . Hamann denies the lingering assumptions of an ontology appropriate to a teleological-cosmological type of theology which pictures the world as a glorifying accomplishment, from which we may move by analogy to a knowledge of its Creator."¹¹

Hamann saw this condescension of God also in the Incarnation of Christ, and in the Holy Spirit's use of men to write the Holy Scriptures. He was deeply impressed with God's gracious condescension to himself, a proud and hateful sinner, at the time of his conversion, as is plainly evident from his own account of his conversion and throughout his writings. The following passage from I Corinthians 1:23, 27 was written on his gravestone: "To the Jews an offense — to the Greeks foolishness, but God elected the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God elected the weak things of the world to confound the strong."¹² It is not the world which can do without God — it is God Who can do without the world and proud man. In the words of I Corinthians 1:25 with which Hamann introduced his reflections on the Bible immediately after, or during, his initial conversion to Christ:

What man would dare to speak, as does Paul, of the foolishness of God, of the weakness of God (I Cor. 1:25). None other but the Spirit Who searches the deep things of God could have revealed this prophecy to us, whose fulfillment is true in our time more than ever, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called to the kingdom of heaven, and that the great God has wanted to reveal His wisdom and power just by this, that He chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; that God chooses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, the lowly and despised things He has *chosen*, yea, things which are not, to bring to nothing things which are and which can boast of their existence.¹³

Hamann recognized that biblical creation is the ground for epistemological unity. This unity also includes the connection of the creation of man in the image and likeness of the Creator with the redemption of man which means restoration of fallen man to the image and likeness of the Creator which was lost or marred through the Fall. "The seventeenth chapter of John," he wrote, "is a commentary about the creation of man because this creation must be held together with the redemption of man if one wishes to evaluate and to admire both in their true light, in their coherence."¹⁴

Hamann was brought up in a "pietist" home, but after his conversion he deliberately and consistently lived a life dedicated to a most un-pietist and

continuous battle against every human thought of his time which would exalt itself against God. He recognized two centuries ago that the world was becoming "post-Christian" in the modern sense of our own day. This is why he strongly emphasized epistemology — the persistent question to rationalist unbelievers how they "know" what they assert they "know." His most trenchant attack against Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* raised the fundamental question whether there is, or can be, such a thing as "pure" reason able to make autonomous *a priori* judgments, because reasoning depends on language which is by no means free from contingent experience and subjective presuppositions. We can only regret that his critique of Kant's work was not published until much later (though he shared the thoughts it contained in private letters, and also in bits and pieces elsewhere in his writings).

Hamann was extremely widely read. He was a fine linguist, being fluent in German, French, English, and able to read and translate Italian, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Arabic and Dutch. His writings bristle with Greek, Latin and some Hebrew quotations, and with countless references to writers of his own day. When we remember that in those days all manuscript writing had to be done laboriously with goosequills dipped in homemade ink, we can only admire the sheer quantity of his literary output and his many letters to his many friends, most of whom he kept through his entire life. He earned a precarious living as a minor employee of the Prussian customs bureaucracy in his native city of Königsberg, supporting his common-law-wife and their four children, and for some years his younger brother who was mentally ill and sank into total silence for the last few years of his life (perhaps in a form of progressive retardation). Yet Hamann's personal writings generally testify to a sweet, humble and kind disposition, love and care for his family and above all unwavering gratitude and fervent devotion to his Lord and God Whom he had come to know as his Saviour from inner unrest and misery in 1758. His "polemical writings" so to call them are largely very difficult to follow, but the fundamental line of attack against any and all attempts of man to assert *autonomy* over against God runs through them all.

Hamann often sounds like an observer of our own day and a prophet long before the events and trends we witness here and now. He predicted, for instance, that a separation of church and state (or rather, God and state!) can only bring about an amoral, lawless state, and that autonomy apart from God must inevitably lead to nihilism (he almost uses this very word). He had no patience or any kind of empathy with the theologians of his time who, much like mainline denomination theologians of today, went along with dead orthodoxy or else anti-Christian Enlightenment thought while yet maintaining a pretense of church membership and professed Christianity or even support of the Scriptures. Yet he himself remained a faithful communicant of the Lutheran church all his life.

Hamann opposed "naturalistic" explanations of such things as the origin of human language. On this particular subject he wrote an excellent "creationist" paper in response to a prize-winning essay by his friend Herder who had proffered a theory of emotive grunts and outcries leading gradually to full-fledged human speech, reminiscent of modern psychological theories today. He staunchly maintained God's ever-present action in all human history over against the "from primitive to civilized man by gradual accretions and accidents" historiographies then current among the educated elite. Probably all

areas of human thought are covered somewhere among his writings except mathematics and the natural sciences. About some scientific theories, by the way, he preserved a healthy skepticism which would have doubtless kept him from being enthralled by the arrogant, elitist "scientism" so rampant in our own generation.¹⁵ Of great profit and interest in this connection is his emphasis on genuine ignorance, and humble confession thereof, as the first step in godly repentance leading to salvation in Christ.

It appears that almost all Hamann's own writings are available at this time only in the original and somewhat old-fashioned German. Excerpts, of course, appear in English translation in secondary sources available to American and other English-speaking readers. While biblical creation is fundamental and crucial in Hamann's thought, he covers a wealth of other subjects pertinent and profitable from the Christian biblical perspective in the social sciences and humanities. This writer was greatly blessed by her preliminary study of Hamann's valiant and profound contributions to Christian apologetics for his own time and even more strongly for our own. He anticipated the work of such modern "pre-suppositionalists" as Cornelius Van Til and Rousas John Rushdoony — and, yes, the creationist movement since the 1960's. In particular he seems to be close in spirit to the thrust of creationists in Australia such as Ken Ham and John Mackay¹⁶ who emphasize the unity between creation and redemption in the eternal Providence of God and the importance of allowing no autonomy whatever to man and man's reason but rather to "cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:5)" in our own neo-pagan age.

FOOTNOTES

¹ *Der Magus im Norden: Aus den Schriften und Briefen von Johann Georg Hamann* (The Magus of the North: From the Writings and Letters of Johann Georg Hamann), (Frankfurt, Germany: Insel-Verlag, 1950), p. 67.

² W.M. Alexander, *Johann Georg Hamann: Philosophy and Faith* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p. 1

³ Johann Georg Hamann, *Saemtliche Werke* (Collected Works), Historisch-kritische Ausgabe von Josef Nadler (Historical-critical edition by Josef Nadler) (Vienna, Austria: Verlag Herder, 1949-1957), I, 320.

⁴ Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁵ Hamann, *op. cit.*, I, 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 12-13.

⁸ Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁹ *Idem.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 29.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹³ Hamann, *op. cit.*, I, 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 16.

¹⁵ cf. Anthony Standen's still excellent *Science Is A Sacred Cow* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1950).

¹⁶ *Casebook No. 2* by Ken Ham. Published 1983 by Creation Science Foundation, P.O. Box 302, Sunnybank, Qld., Australia, or order in the USA form *Ex Nihilo*, P.O. Box 6064, Evanston, IL 60204, \$1.00 per copy.

Quotations from Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788)

Selected and translated by Ellen Myers

I. Creation

1. Speak that I may see Thee! This desire was fulfilled by creation which is a speech to the creature by the creature; for day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge; there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard, their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
2. The book of creation [Genesis] contains examples of general concepts which God wanted to reveal to the creature by the creature, the books of the covenant contain examples of secret articles which God wanted by man to man. The unity of the Originator is mirrored even in the dialects of His works — in all there is One sound of measureless height and depth! A proof of the most glorious majesty and the most abject humiliation!
3. Finally God crowned the sensible revelation of His glory by the masterpiece of man. He created man in the image of God — in the image of God created He him. This counsel of the Originator solves the most tangled knots of human nature and of its destiny.
4. This analogy of man to his Creator distributes to all creatures their content and their character on which loyalty and faith in all nature depends. The more vivid this idea, the image of the invisible GOD (Col. 1:15 etc.) is in our awareness; the more able we are to see His generosity in the creatures, and to taste it, to contemplate it and to seize it with our hands. Every imprint of nature in man is not only a memento but a token of the foundation truth — Who the LORD is. Every counter-imprint of man upon nature is the letter and seal of our share in God's nature (2 Peter 1:4, Romans 8:29), and that we are of His lineage (Malachi 3:2).
5. No mere potter of plastic forms, but a Father of fiery spirits and breathing powers shows Himself in His entire work.
6. The love of God was the foundation of creation. God chose especially the human race, the youngest and smallest, in order to reveal His love in it, and in this love for the grasshoppers of creation to reveal His great and glorious Name to all other kinds, greater worlds, yea, even to the inhabitants and princes of heaven. This love caused Him to imprint His image in us in creation — God has just this love for each individual human being which He had for the entire human race, because each individual man received His image in creation. The image of your Godhood, however, o Lovel is restored only through faith which unites in our souls the grace of God the Father, the love of the Son, and the communion or intimate working of the Holy Spirit.
7. All creation is a trunk which expands into innumerable branches; all humankind taken together must come before us in just this picture, and each individual nation, yea, each man (as) a grain of seed in which lies the

entire pattern of all creation.

8. God lets man see and taste His goodness in a thousand forms, in a thousand metamorphoses, which are nothing but the outer shells of His goodness which flows through the entire creation as the foundation of its existence and blessedness.
9. God created, matter and form. The existence and determination of the same, so that nothing became something, and this something everything which He willed. How can we express this in words when we are not in a position to conceive it in the least.

II. God's Self-Revelation to Man: Scripture and Providence in Nature and History

1. God an Author! — the inspiration of this book [the Bible] is just as great a condescension and humiliation of God as the creation of the Father and the Becoming Human of the Son. Meekness of heart is therefore the only state of conscious awareness which is fit for reading the Bible, and the most indispensable preparation for the same.
The Creator is denied, the Redeemer crucified, and the Spirit of Wisdom has been slandered. The word of this Spirit is just as great a work as the creation and just as great a mystery as is the redemption of man, yea, this word is the key for the works of the former and the mysteries of the latter. The summit of atheism-mongering and the greatest sorcery of unbelief is therefore the blindness to recognize God in the Revelation and the crime to despise this means of grace. As little as an animal is able to read the fables of an Aesop, or a Phaedrus and a La Fontaine; but should it be able to read them, it would not be able to render as bestial judgments about the meaning of the stories and their aptness as man has criticized and philosophized about the book of God.
2. We see our custom to explain the works of God by natural causes in the example of those who attributed the finger of the Holy Spirit to the effect of sweet wine.
3. The Spirit of God is the historian of the Bible — we must see Him brood above the waters, or else we will find nothing but desert, emptiness and darkness in the depth.
4. He who feels the Spirit of God within himself will surely also feel Him in the Scriptures. . . . it was His purpose to please none other but believers, true Christians, by His divine Word. He is not concerned with the unbeliever, no matter how simple or how scholarly he may be, he is excluded for Him; the believer is His confidant; he is fed by the simplest and the most subtle understanding with the same fervent desire, with the same measure, with the same wealth of heavenly truth and supernatural grace.
5. It has pleased God to hide His counsel with us men, to reveal to us as much as is necessary for our salvation and our comfort; but to do this in a way which is intended to deceive the wise men of this world and the masters of the same. This is why God has used things worthless, things contemptible, yea, things which are not, as the apostle says, as instruments of His more secret counsel and hidden will.
6. Would the Spirit of God Himself have needed so many books, have repeated Himself so often, have used such a cloud of testimonies and witnesses, if this had not been made indispensable by our sin, by the

greatness of our unbelief?

7. Lord, Thy Word makes us wise even if it had not taught us anything but to count our days. What an illusion, what a nothing they are in our eyes when reason counts them! What an all, what an eternity, when faith counts them! Lord! teach me to number my days so I may become wise! Everything is wisdom in Your ordering of nature when the Spirit of Your Word unlocks our spirit. All is a maze, all is disorder, when we want to see by ourselves.
8. Nature is magnificent, who can overlook her? who understands her language? She is dumb, she is lifeless for the natural man. The Scripture, God's Word, is more magnificent, is more perfect, is the nurse who gives us the first food and who makes us strong so that we may gradually walk on our own feet.
9. All appearances of nature are dreams, visions, puzzles, which have their meaning, their secret sense. The books of nature and of history are only ciphers, hidden signs which need the key which the Holy Scripture furnishes and which is the purpose of its inspiration.
10. It belongs to the unity of divine revelation that the Spirit of God, by using the human pens of the holy men impelled by Him, demeans Himself and denudes Himself of His majesty just as much as the Son of God through appearing in the form of a servant, and as the whole creation is a work of the highest meekness. . . . Thus if God's way of writing chooses also the silly — the shallow — the common in order to shame the strength and ingenuity of all profane scribblers; then certainly enlightened, eager eyes armed with jealousy, the eyes of a friend, of a confidant are required to recognize in such disguise the rays of divine glory.
11. Indisputably God has found it more appropriate to His wisdom to tie this closer revelation of Himself first to one single man, thereupon to his family, and finally to a special nation before He wanted to permit (His revelation) to be more general. The reasons for this choice are as little open to our research as why He pleased to create in six days that which His will might just as fitly have made real in one single point of time.
12. Without an individual providence God cannot be regent of the universe nor judge of men and spirits. I am convinced of this truth *a priori* by the given Word of revelation, and *a posteriori* by my own and daily experience. The highest Being is in the most essential understanding an individual (person) which cannot be conceptualized or imagined by any other standard but the standard It itself gives, and not in accordance with arbitrary presuppositions of our presumption and our impertinent ignorance.

III. Man Made Whole by God

1. A world without God is a human being without head — without heart, intestines or reproductive parts.
2. It is evident how necessarily our self is rooted in its Creator, so that the knowledge of self is beyond our capacity. Indeed, in order to survey its full dimensions, we must penetrate into the very person of the Godhead, which alone can determine and solve the whole secret of our existence.
3. The Christian alone is a human being, a father, a lord over the animals. He alone loves himself, his family, and his goods, because he loves God, Who first loved him, loved him before he existed and loved him after he came to be his enemy. My Lord and my God!

4. Here on this earth there is no possibility of a metamorphosis or transfiguration into the divine nature, but only the old message of rebirth.
5. Without faith in God which is worked by His Spirit, and without the merit of the only Mediator it is impossible to love ourselves and our neighbors.
6. That which no eye has seen, that which no ear has heard, and that which has not entered into the heart of any man — herein consists the only religion which is worthy of a highest Being and is acceptable to Him, and which GOD has prepared of those who love Him.
7. David says: I have seen the end of all perfection; your law is exceeding broad [Psalm 119:96]. In what lovable extension and width we see here our religion and our ethics; in what agreeable, easy liberty we as Christians can use everything, sanctify everything! Every truth of reason and of will in cognition and in deeds, whatsoever is venerable — whatsoever is equitable and just — whatsoever is pure — whatsoever is lovely — whatsoever belongs to a good name and good life — whatsoever belongs to perfection of public and domestic life — whatsoever can give you praise before men looking upon you as Christians — make all this the object of your reflection, your investigation, your comparison, your imitation and your actions.
8. This suitability of our religion to all the inclinations, drives and requirements of our nature, this precise relation of its truths and revelations to our greatest needs and smallest imperfections as well as to our highest and most transcendent desires is a source of uncommonly fruitful and fascinating meditations — and besides that, a more convincing proof that it has the same Author as nature.
9. The foundation of religion lies in our whole existence and beyond the sphere of our cognitive powers which all put together amount to the most coincidental and most abstract mode of our existence.
10. Our dignity is . . . not dependent on understanding, will, and activity, but remains the gift of a higher choice, not an innate, but an acquired merit, yet not self-acquired or independent, but absolutely dependent and precisely for that reason more firm and abiding.
11. This dignity . . . presupposes no worthiness or merit of our nature, but is, like our nature itself, a direct gift of grace from the Giver of all things.
12. The beauty of things consists in the moment of their maturation for which God is waiting. He who would taste the blossoms of cherry trees for their fruits would give a bad judgment of them; he who would judge the cool shadow of the trees in accordance with the weather of winter or according to their form in that season would judge quite blindly; yet nevertheless we make such judgments about God's government and its intents and purposes

IV. History and Philosophy

1. Is not Christianity to be recognized as older than heathenism and Judaism, and has not the Author and Finisher of our faith Himself said: Before Abraham was —
2. Why do you stop at the perforated cisterns of the Greeks and forsake the most living wellsprings of antiquity?
3. If the smallest blade of grass is a proof of God, how should the smallest actions of men mean less? . . . Nature and history are therefore the two great commentaries of God's Word, and God's Word, on the other hand, is

- the only key which will open to us recognition of truth in both.
4. The entire history of Judaism was not only prophecy; rather, its spirit was occupied more than that of all other nations, to whom one perhaps cannot deny the analogy of a similar dark divination and anticipation, with the ideal of a saviour and judge, a man of power . . . Moses' Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Prophets are full of hints and glimpses of this appearance of . . . a star out of Judah, of . . . the signs of contradiction in the ambiguous form of His person, His message of peace and joy, His works and pains, His obedience unto death, even death on a cross! (translated by Stephen Dunning)
 5. There were godly men among the heathen (and) we should not despise the cloud of these witnesses (as) heaven anointed them as His messengers and interpreters, and ordained them for the very calling among their race which the prophets had among the Jews.
 6. As no young sparrow falls to the ground without our God; thus no monument of antiquity has been lost for us which we should have need to bewail. Should not His providence extend to writings in view of the fact that He himself became a writer, and as the Spirit of God was so precise in noting down the value of the first forbidden books which a pious zeal of our religion has sacrificed to fire [Acts 19:18-19]?
 7. The entire history of the Jewish people seems . . . to be a living, spirit- and heart-awakening elementary text of all historical literature (translated by Stephen Dunning)
 8. [History is] a sealed book, a concealed witness, a riddle which is not amenable to solution without plowing with another heifer than our reason.
 9. God has revealed Himself to mankind in nature and in His Word. The similarities and the relationships between these two revelations have not yet been sufficiently set forth, nor yet distinctly explained, nor yet has their harmony been pursued; in all this a healthy philosophy could open for itself a wide field for investigation.
 10. Without faith we ourselves cannot understand creation and nature — hence the efforts to exclude God's Word and will, to explain reality by hypotheses and probability, and the many doubts which have been raised about Moses' report.
 11. That Moses should have explained himself about nature according to Aristotelian, Cartesian or Newtonian concepts would be just as ridiculous a request as that God should have revealed Himself in the general philosophical language which the stone of the wise has been in so many scholarly heads.
 12. Nature is as little subject to blind chance or to eternal laws as all events can be accounted for by characteristics and reasons of state. A Newton as a physicist will be as strongly touched by the wise omnipotence of God as an historian will be touched by the wise government of God.
 13. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and His evangelical love is the end and conclusion of wisdom. I know no other starting point than His Word, His oath and His *I am — and will be*, in which consists the entire glory of His old and new Name, a name no creature is able to pronounce.
 14. Flesh and blood know no other god besides the universe, no other saviour but a manufactured pseudo-man, no other spirit but the latter. A man

- cannot receive anything except it be given him.
15. The movement of a clock presupposes a proper design of its mechanism and the condition of being wound up. Should our nature in some especially precise way depend upon the will of a higher Being, then it follows of itself that one would need the concept of that Being in order to explain (our nature); and that the more light we would receive in contemplating this higher Being, the more our own nature would become understandable.
 16. We do not owe our happiness to the tree of knowledge.
 17. Reason is inclined to serve an unknown God, but infinitely far from *knowing* Him. She does not want to know Him — and even more astounding — when she does recognize Him then she stops serving Him. . . . The Athenians were reverent enough to prostrate themselves to an unknown God; as soon as this unknown God was revealed to them they no longer cared about him.
 18. If a mother does not even know what nature is forming in her bowels, how should our reason comprehend anything of what God is working in us, can work in us or will work in us?
 19. Our philosophy must start with heaven — and not with the theater of anatomy and the sectioning of a cadaver. . . . may the horizon of the reader be opened to the revelation of our lost and restored dignity of the Image of God[in man] . . . Here, as far as I know, lie the sources and ground ideas of all true philosophy and history of our divine race and (our) sacred destiny for glory.
 20. Our beautiful intellects who deny the Pope his infallibility assure us that something is wrong with religion in order to find us all the more gullible with regard to their own arguments, and they raise the flag of their own infallibility.
 21. The opinions of the philosophers are versions of nature, and the propositions of the theologians (are) versions of the Scripture. The Author is the best interpreter of His words; He may speak through creation — through events — or through blood and fire and smoke, wherein consists the language of the sanctuary.
 22. Woe to us if it depended upon us to become creators, inventors and forgers of our future happiness. The first commandment is: Thou shalt not eat, Genesis 2, and the last: Come, everything is ready. Eat, my beloved ones, and drink, my friends, drink to the full. But mathematical certainty? — it will be all over with it when heaven and earth pass away. His words, however, will not pass away, nor will their certainty.

Note: The foregoing is an extremely small sampling of Hamann's Christ-centered thought from his voluminous writings and correspondence. As yet most of this great Christian's works have not been translated into English from the original German. English-speaking readers desirous of learning more about and from Hamann might profitably read the following English-language commentaries:

W.M. Alexander, *Johann Georg Hamann: Philosophy and Faith* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966)

James C. O'Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979)

Biblical Creation in the Russian Orthodox Liturgy

Alexander A. Bogolepov, **Orthodox Hymns of Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter**. Russian Orthodox Theological Fund, Inc., New York; distributed by St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 575 Scarsdale Road, Crestwood, NY 10707. 76 pp., paper, \$1.95.

This little book, first published in Russian in Tallin (Reval, Estonia) in 1934, presents translations of Russian Orthodox hymns of Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter, the most important holy day of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The entire book is a great joy to the Christian believer as it introduces us in a very warm, personal, joyful yet reverent way to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The surprise is how frequently and how totally inescapably He is presented as the Creator of all things. It is palpably evident that in these hymns there breathes "in particular . . . the spirit of the Gospel of St. John, a lively sense that Eternal Life has entered into this life on earth, that God the Word has appeared to men in the flesh, that men have seen Him with their own eyes, touched Him with their hands, have beheld the victory and glory of the Only Begotten Son of God (John 1:1-14, I John 1:1-3). . . reverent worship of what is for man's mind the incomprehensible union of the divine and human, which led to the birth of Him who has no beginning, the death of Him who is immortal, and life beyond the grave." (pp. 7-8)

Let us now quote from the many Orthodox liturgical hymns relating us to Christ the Creator. The Christmas hymns refer to Him as "the Son who was born of the Father before all ages," emphasizing His eternal deity (p. 10). He is called the Creator in His work of regeneration:

Man, who, being made in the image of God
Had become corrupt through sin, and was full of vileness,
And had fallen away from the better life Divine,
Doth the wise Creatore restore anew. (p. 15)

"As God at the Creation took some earth and out of it created a man, so now, in the words of the Pre-Christmas Canon,

. . . Thou, O Creator, who Thyself art born on earth,
Dost create human beings anew.

"The ultimate goal of man's recreation is to lead him back to his original condition, 'to restore the lost image of God.'

Now hath all mankind cast off its decay,
Seeing how Thou, O Creator,
Hast appeared on earth as the Baby
And art renewing mankind and raising it up to the beauty
It possessed on the Day of Creation.

i.e., to the beauty of God's image." (p. 16)

The blessing for all creation is emphasized by the Orthodox Christmas liturgy:

At the birth of the Lord of Glory

The whole creation played with joy. (p. 25)

and

Today the whole creation rejoices and is jubilant

For Christ is born of the Virgin. (p. 26)

We find the following references to our Lord as Creator in the Orthodox hymns used in Holy Week:

Thou who art the Lord of all and God the Creator, Thou to whom suffering is unknown, didst humble Thyself and unite Thyself with Thy creation (which undergoes suffering), and as the Passover (as the Paschal Lamb that was slain), Thou hast offered Thyself to those for whom Thou wilt to die, saying, 'Eat of My Body, and be established in faith.' (p. 34)

The liturgy emphasizes that the Creator Himself is uncreated: "Be mindful, all ye faithful, of the heavenly summons of the uncreated, and self-existent Wisdom of God." (p. 35) How beautiful and deeply moving is this passage from the liturgy used on Good Friday: "The violent throng of those who despised God and wished to kill Him in their rage surrounded Thee, O Christ; and brought Thee to death like a criminal, Thou who art the Creator of all." (p. 37) Similarly a prayer on the theme, "O Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me" exclaims in awe:

The Creator is struck by the hand of His creation,

The Judge of the living and the dead

Is himself condemned upon the Tree. (pp. 38-39)

Christ is portrayed as comforting His mother on the eve of His Resurrection with these words:

In willing to save my Creation I wished to die,

But as the God of heaven and earth

I shall rise again, and I shall raise thee too. (p. 44)

The Orthodox liturgy on Holy Saturday, the day before the Resurrection, contains these statements:

O Son of God, the King of all, my God, my Creator, how didst Thou submit to this Passion? (p. 46)

"The mind cannot grasp" (writes Bogolepov) "how the Lord and Creator of all could undergo suffering, how He could suffer death at the hands of beings He Himself created, or how He could be buried like an ordinary mortal." (pp. 46-47) The liturgy says, "Joseph and Nicodemus buried the Creator as befits the dead." "Come, all ye creatures, . . . let us offer our lamentations to the Creator." (p. 47) And how can we not be moved as modern twentieth-century believers in Biblical creation when we read in the ancient, traditional Orthodox liturgy:

Seeing Thee suspended in the Place of the Skull, Thou who didst suspend the whole earth in space without support, all creation cried out in deepest dread: "There is none holy, save Thee, O Lord." (p. 47)

How can we not be moved by reflecting upon reading these words from the Orthodox Canon of Holy Saturday, "The blessed Tomb received the Creator as one who slept, and was revealed as the divine treasure-house of life, for the salvation of us who now sing: 'Blessed art Thou, O God our Redeemer.'" (p. 50)

And what about the Orthodox liturgy celebrating Easter, its highest and

holiest feast day? Bogolepov writes:

Nor does the Liturgy on the first day of Easter make reference in its Gospel to the Resurrection of Christ, instead it tells of the eternal begetting of the Son by the Father, and of the Divine nature of the Son. It tells us that in the beginning, before the appearance of the visible world, the Word or Logos existed, Creative Intelligence, Divine Wisdom and Power; that this Word was with God, and was God. All things came into being in the world through Him, and without Him there has been nothing created. And what is most important: in Him was life, the fullness of vital energy, which He has brought to the people in the world. "I have come," said Christ, "so that men might have life, and have it in all its fullness." (Jn. 10:10). But when He who made the world came into the world with the new gift of life, the world did not recognize in Him its own Creator and Source of Life. . . . Only the Author of Life Himself, the very Creator of the world, could resurrect the dead and bestow upon men the possibility of life after death. St. John's doctrine of Christ as God-the-Word raises to the very highest level our understanding of His work and of the significance of "the saving Pascha of our God." (pp. 60-61)

Bogolepov ends his beautiful little book as follows:

In Orthodoxy the spiritual life is regarded in the light of the Resurrection. Orthodoxy lives under the sign of the Resurrection, and this victorious sign fills men with courage and hope that God's truth will triumph amidst all the vicissitudes of human life. (p. 78)

He might have pointed out again that the Resurrection depended on the power of "the Author of Life Himself, the very Creator of the world," but truly such reiterated emphasis is not needed for one who has faithfully read the entire book. This book is a great and special blessing to the Christian who believes in Biblical creation. Indeed it is so alive with the spirit of Biblical creation that we might wish to give it to friends, and consider using it as a soul-winning instrument. It is filled with life, joy, truth, the simplicity of the Gospel, and a sense of living communion with Christ and with fellow believers. Whatever one's doctrinal or theological differences might be with the Russian or Eastern Orthodox Church, they need in no wise detract from enjoying this book, a fact which is a beautiful testimony to "mere Christianity" and its foundation truth of Biblical creation.

— *Reviewed by Ellen Myers*

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